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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
THE DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

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MEMORANDUM

March 28, 1962

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TO : The Secretary

THROUGH: S/S

FROM : INR - Roger Hilsman (R)

SUBJECT: Soviet Intentions Regarding Berlin

CATEGORY "B"

Completely de-sensitized  
Transferred to O/PADRC

by ~~S/S~~ date 2-5-23

1. We believe the Soviets remain interested in talks on Berlin and related subjects and hope to steer discussions to a summit. They have not so far made any significant departure from their insistence on terminating the "occupation status", withdrawal of Western troops, and "respect for GDR sovereignty" by which they seem to mean inter alia last German administration of access. Regarding wider issues, they appear to want recognition of frontiers including the demarcation line, a non-aggression treaty, and agreement on non-diffusion of nuclear weapons applicable specifically to Germany and drawn in such a way as to hinder plans for a NATO nuclear force.

2. On all these issues the Soviets have stated maximum positions. They undoubtedly have fall-back positions on some or all of them. They do not, however, appear likely to disclose where they are prepared to give until they have further probed our own flexibility on the issues listed in paragraph 1. The one slightly novel element that we noted in your final talk with Gromyko was his evident effort to begin testing the limits of our position on non-diffusion.

3. We find it difficult to prognosticate what the Soviet fall-back positions may be; but we remain inclined to think that if the Soviets can get what they regard as satisfaction on (1) non-diffusion, (2) recognition of frontiers, and (3) non-aggression they might then soften somewhat their demands relating to Berlin, though probably not to the point of agreeing to (1) the indefinite presence of Western forces, (2) no change whatsoever in present access modalities and (3) a formula which would make it difficult to raise the question of the "occupation status" again at a later time.

4. We find it difficult also to estimate how long the Soviets will persist in their effort to seek a negotiated arrangement. We doubt they have a clear idea either. In any

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event, they seem for the moment persuaded that it remains worth trying; that there will be a summit on these matters at some reasonably early time and that the difficult decisions that would have to be made in the wake of continued stalemate or of failure to obtain enough of what they want can be postponed until after the top-level confrontation.

5. Meanwhile, it is apparent that the Soviets mean to exploit Western vulnerabilities in and on the routes to Berlin. All signs indicate intent to harass Western air traffic, possibly even to the point of seriously undermining the effectiveness of BASC; to annoy ground access and possibly make maintenance of the Military Missions impossible; and to peck away at civilian communications between West Berlin and the outside world so as increasingly to give West Berlin the de facto status of a separate sovereignty. The Soviets evidently think this kind of activity strengthens their negotiating hand and enables them to score minor, though cumulatively meaningful, subtractions from the Western position, which the West will find it difficult if not impossible to retrieve. But we continue to believe that a deliberate major incursion into Western rights or steps tantamount to a blockade of civilian communication are quite unlikely while the Soviets continue their negotiating efforts.

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